

November 1, 1967

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

on "The Politics of Escalation," about which I informed the Senate prior to its publication in a speech of June 30, 1966.

Dr. Robert Buckhout of the university's psychology department has published an article on Thailand, based on the conference last May, which appeared in the October 2 issue of the Nation. The Foreign Policy Roundtable will publish a volume dealing with Thailand late this year or in early spring, focusing on the impact of the U.S. presence in Thailand on the Thai culture, the degree of involvement of the United States in the counterinsurgency program in Thailand and the extent of U.S. commitment to the Thailand Government.

I recommend the careful consideration of Dr. Buckhout's article, reflecting as it does the consensus of experts on Thailand. I therefore ask unanimous consent that it may appear in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The Nation, Oct. 2, 1967]

THAILAND: WHERE WE CAME IN

(By Robert Buckhout)

(NOTE.—A little noticed column in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch this summer carried the news of an emergency request by the Thailand Government for more helicopters to fight insurgents. The alleged increase in insurgent activity may call for further increase of the already large U.S. commitment of up to 40,000 military men. Sensing in such reports from Thailand a possible parallel to Vietnam of about 1961, the Foreign Policy Roundtable at Washington University in St. Louis had called a conference in May of anthropologists, political scientists and journalists, expert in the area to discuss present conditions in Thailand and the effects of our involvement on Thai culture and on the course of foreign policy in Southeast Asia.

(In 1966, the Foreign Policy Roundtable was instrumental in producing Politics of Escalation in Vietnam (Fawcett Premier Books and Beacon Press), an analysis of the relationships between attempts to negotiate a Vietnamese settlement and military escalation by the United States. The proceedings of the present conference will be part of a similar book, designed to acquaint the American people with the complexities of Thailand in the face of growing U.S. involvement there.

(The following article summarizing the content of the conference is by Robert Buckhout of the Department of Psychology, Washington University, who is serving as editor of the forthcoming volume. However, the views expressed here are the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of individual participants or of the Roundtable.)

Long clouded by semi-official secrecy, the extent of the build-up of United States involvement in Thailand is now becoming visible:

Thailand has become a landlocked aircraft carrier for up to 80 per cent of the missions flown by U.S. (and recently Australian) Air Force bombers against targets in North Vietnam and Laos. B-52 bombers now fly out of Thailand on bombing missions.

U.S. troops numbering 40,000 are stationed in Thailand (2,000 were there in 1961), principally in direct support of the air bases and logistical network involved in the bombing program. Military aid to Thailand is publicly acknowledged to be \$60 million per year. Supplies, weapons and bases have been positioned in advance to accommodate one 17,000-man U.S. combat division when necessary.

Military advisers, ex-FBI men, CIA personnel, the Green Berets and an unknown portion of the 40,000 U.S. military troops are involved in training Thai military and police forces to cope with alleged Communist-led insurgent movements in Northeastern and Southern Thailand. This counterinsurgency program was until recently under the command of Maj. Gen. Richard G. Stilwell, who directed similar efforts in Vietnam in 1961.

As in Vietnam, it has been recognized that the 95,000-man Thai army was shaped by years of U.S. military assistance into a cumbersome World War II-like army capable of fighting small conventional battles, but unsuited for anti-guerrilla or pacification operations. Efforts to restyle the Thai military meet resistance from the officer ranks, since the large units and conventional arms are politically useful for gaining privileges, promotions and power.

U.S. helicopter pilots have flown Thai soldiers into action in the Northeast pending the training of Thai helicopter pilots.

The United States Information Service (USIS) and other U.S. agencies, are engaged in intensive propaganda efforts through television, radio and mobile information teams in rural areas, to trumpet the virtues of the present Thai Government. This is the political side of the counterinsurgency (COIN) program. The United States Operations Mission (USOM), deploying an annual \$42-million economic aid program, pushes the Accelerated Redevelopment Program (ARD) to raise living standards in the rural areas. It hopes thus to reduce grievances before they can be exploited by the insurgents. ARD has replaced the "resettlement" of tribes in the Northeast, a program that was similar in concept to the "strategic hamlets" of Vietnam. Social scientists are conducting studies all over Thailand, the sponsors including the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), the Stanford-Research Institute, RAND and hardware manufacturers such as Ford-Philco. The CIA program is headed by Peir De Silva, former CIA chief in Saigon.

Part of the many-sided U.S. program is intended to combat "internal Communist aggression." The impoverished Northeast sector, long neglected by Bangkok governments, is regarded as "security sensitive" because of a long history of estrangement, an immediate threat of insurgency—and the location there recently of Air Force bases used to bomb North Vietnam. At the Foreign Policy Roundtable Conference, participants described the Northeastern insurgents as principally Thais who are alienated from the Bangkok government.

The U.S. State Department, in its latest bulletin on the subject, estimates the number of insurgents in the Northeast to be less than 1,000, but growing. They are said to be organized as the Thai Patriotic Front, and to be engaging in propaganda and selective assassination. These charges are debatable, since banditry and rough politics are common in the Northeast. Other official sources state that the insurgents receive aid, training and leadership cadres from North Vietnam, Laos and China. In addition, a clandestine radio, "The Voice of Thailand," is reported to be operating from Southern China.

Since some 40,000 North Vietnamese refugees (along with other nonassimilated groups) live in Northeast Thailand, a remote area of poor farm land and ill-patrolled borders, it is clear that the Bangkok government has little effective control of the region. The insurgents capitalize on years of government neglect and harsh treatment of the peasants.

Similarly, the permeable borders of Southern Thailand aggravate a situation in which a nonassimilated Malay population, with its own Muslim religion, and the remnants of an old Malayan Communist revolutionary group, contribute another security problem. One conferee reported that the Thai Government control of the South is so ineffec-

tive that the insurgents allegedly roam about collecting taxes, demanding food and shelter in return for guarantees of safety. As the speaker noted, when Thai control does extend into remote areas, the local population is subject to the same demands from the Thai police.

Past Thai political efforts to assimilate the Malaysians have been ineffective, hampered as they are by a language barrier, a history of Thai indifference and harsh treatment, and the occasional outbreak of violent movements seeking independence or union with Malaysia. Military forces sent against the insurgents, in conjunction with Malaysia, have failed even to find the insurgents, whose numbers are estimated variously from a few hundred to 1,500. The conferees tended to believe that the size of the Southern insurgent movement had not increased significantly since 1950. Recent newspaper and magazine stories, on the other hand, speak of greatly increased activity and a possible link-up of the Southern and Northeastern insurgencies.

Most of the conferees felt that the effect to date of these insurgencies was relatively small, but that, considering the basic problems confronting Thailand and the nature of its government, they posed a potentially serious threat to the regime. As one speaker pointed out, an insurgency of sufficient scope to topple the Bangkok government might be far beyond the capacities of the dissident elements, but an effort of much smaller magnitude could render large sections of the country ungovernable for a long period of time. A far more immediate threat is the possibility of mortar attacks or sabotage against U.S. air bases. Some doubt was expressed, however, as to the accuracy of reports on the degree of Communist control over the insurgents, it being a suggestion that certain Thai leaders might be exaggerating the Communist menace in order to stimulate more U.S. military assistance.

Since most of the conferees were social scientists, much attention was devoted to describing the social structure of Thailand, the way American influences interact with it and the social disequilibrium that results from the presence of the U.S. military in considerable numbers.

Into a stable economy has come an influx of money, jobs and opportunity related to the military build-up by the U.S. Bangkok is now the rest and recuperation center for Vietnamese GIs who come in at the rate of 700 per day. The adornment of Thai cities with bars for Americans, the increases in prostitution, the attraction of young educated Thais to lucrative jobs with American firms, are conspicuous examples of the social malaise which, while it did not begin with the arrival of the GIs, is exacerbated by their presence.

As more Americans become advisers at all levels of the Thai bureaucracy (whose officials are appointed by the junta) they become increasingly frustrated by the Thai's lack of administrative coordination and efficiency. While Thais prefer to receive specific technical training, the Americans prefer to suggest better ways of organization. This conflicts with the Thai reluctance to question administrative superiors. The Americans don't want to let Thailand drift into the chaos of Vietnam but, in the opinion of some of the conferees, the size and the disruptive potential of the U.S. economic and military aid program may threaten the very order that such a program was intended to preserve.

One anthropologist described the social order of Thailand as a bundle of fine gold independent chains. The vertical organization of Thailand's social order leads to patterns in which Thais look upward for help from powerful, superior figures—topped by the king. One speaker pointed out that U.S. military aid has made the Pentagon the benefactor of people in the Thai military chain. These men, faithful to their social precepts, accept gratefully the largess of a benefactor.

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What the benefactor wishes then becomes a dependent's amiable duty to provide, for to question threatens the integrity of the chains. Thus, when Washington proposes to build airfields, to man them with Americans, and to fly bombers for the Vietnamese War, the Thai military could not say no. Another speaker, however, noted that the Thai military might also be motivated to join with the United States by their traditional hostility to the Vietnamese.

An inevitable result of the U.S. military assistance program has been to strengthen the military chains and to corrode the integrity of other chains. Recently, in a move toward "efficiency," the Minister of the Interior and army commander, Gen. Praphat Charusathien, took over the elementary school system from the Ministry of Education. Thus, a military man now controls the civil service division which has the most direct political effect on all segments of the population. General Praphat is reputedly the strong man in the Thai Government whose ascent may reflect a shift in emphasis from political reforms in rural areas to more vigorous military action against insurgents. It was he who issued the recent urgent call for more helicopters.

The uniqueness of Thailand has historically been its nationalism and the conduct of a foreign policy designed to insure its independence. Stability has depended upon the ability of any Thai regime to mobilize nationalistic sentiment. The folk heroes of the Thai population are low-born heroes who threw off foreign conquerors. One anthropologist emphasized that the U.S. military presence imperils the plausibility of the governments' claim to be the sole custodian of Thai national symbols and traditions. The visibility of Americans lends credence to the Peking radio charge that Thailand politicians are lackeys of the United States.

Social change has been occurring in Thailand which will invariably bring about new developments and considerable fluidity in a society whose institutions have been stable and relatively undemanding, at least to the average villager. The anthropologist pointed out that modernization itself produces institutional transformation and social and personal dislocation. In Thailand, for example, it has meant an increase in landlessness among peasants.

However, this same speaker doubted that the social changes taking place, independent of the war in Southeast Asia, would yield directly to plans and predictions derived from U.S. understanding of situations alien to the Thai situation—such as the economic-military redevelopment program in Vietnam. As a Thai spokesman pointed out, the effort in Vietnam involves the virtual building of a nation from scratch. In Thailand, on the contrary, excluding the regional splinter groups, a sense of nationhood has existed for centuries. The particular government in power may now be expected by the people to deliver some of the services it is promising, but, despite the impatience of American advisers, the cohesive, proud, Thai culture does not need, nor is it likely to tolerate, the sort of complete societal remodeling that has been resorted to in Vietnam. Thai nationalism doesn't have to be created—it is there.

The spectacle of a Bangkok government totally committing itself to the foreign policy of the United States may well create conditions which could be exploited by insurgents who remain identified with nationalistic symbols.

The United States is in Thailand at the request of the Thai Government. This familiar phrase is the keystone to a brand of flexible diplomacy which has permitted the United States to escalate its military involvement in Thailand almost without discussion at home. It has also meant a reversal of the

700-year-old Thai "bamboo policy"—that is, bending with the wind.

Both the build-up of U.S. forces, and the details of military and economic assistance programs between the two governments were kept secret for some time. In a little publicized step, Dean Rusk and Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman signed a joint statement on March 6, 1962, reinterpreting and making bilateral the SEATO treaty. This document is now cited as the authority for the U.S. aid program. The agreement came in for considerable discussion at the Foreign Policy Roundtable.

Article 4 of the SEATO treaty declares that the signers (Australia, Great Britain, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines and the United States) shall by unanimous agreement act to meet common danger and immediately report the steps taken to the Security Council of the United Nations. The United States was thus committed under the treaty to the collective defense of member nations, including Thailand.

The Rusk-Khoman agreement effectively amends the SEATO treaty by stipulating that the obligations to "meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes . . . does not depend upon the prior agreement of all other parties to the treaty, since this treaty obligation is individual as well as collective." In effect, this means that the United States knows that it could never get the votes of France and Pakistan to intervene in Thailand—especially when the SEATO treaty is interpreted by the Rusk-Khoman agreement as providing "an important basis for U.S. actions to help Thailand meet indirect aggression." The U.S. also pledged itself to preserve the independence and integrity of Thailand and help it meet Communist subversion.

It need hardly be pointed out that the steps taken to enlarge the U.S. military commitment in Thailand were largely unknown to the Americans (or Thais). Obviously, the U.S. Government has done almost nothing to publicize either the extent or the purpose of the buildup. Just how the independence of Thailand can be preserved by converting the country into a forward base for U.S. strategic policy is unclear. Thai and U.S. Government officials maintain that while the United States is doing the bombing of North Vietnam from Thailand, the Thai military has the main responsibility in the counter-insurgency effort. U.S. forces are acting as advisers under standing orders not to engage in combat—so says the official State Department paper.

However, *The New York Times* carried a story on November 26, 1966, that U.S. military advisers were at that time accompanying lower-level Thai units on anti-guerrilla sweeps, as well as flying helicopters.

Thus, as in Vietnam in 1961, U.S. military forces have become exposed as "noncombatants," with an excellent chance of being dragged into a hot war against Thai insurgents if an American were killed or a U.S. helicopter shot down. This potential, coupled with the vague wording of the Rusk-Khoman agreement, suggests that the United States commitment to the Thai military regime is as open-ended as the one woven out of the Eisenhower letter to President Diem in Vietnam.

When a former State Department official, who helped draft the Rusk-Khoman agreement, was asked at the conference to speculate on what the United States would do if the insurgency flared up to where American air bases were being attacked, he asserted that Thai police and armed forces could handle that sort of situation; but he later conceded that we might reach the point, as we did in 1965 in Vietnam, where we would have to make the choice between wading in or pulling out.

But is there still a real choice? The question in the minds of many at the conference

was whether we had not already committed ourselves to defend the stability of the Thai military dictatorship against any threat, whether from outside military forces or internal political ones. Had we not, by placing vital military bases in Thailand, defined the *status quo* in terms of the present regime, whether or not it is responsive to the social changes going on in Thailand or to the needs that these changes create for its people? Is there some threshold to be reached, as in Vietnam, where the threat to U.S. interests will cause us to cease trusting the Thais and gradually take over the military and then the political jobs of counter-insurgency? Will we not then be tempted to line up with the strong man who takes a clear anti-Communist stand, regardless of his sensitivities toward the needs of the Thai people?

These are largely unanswerable questions, but as speculations based on the Vietnamese experience they are reasonable. Thailand no longer conducts an independent foreign or even domestic policy. The Thais proudly assert that they could send the Yankees home if they wished. But, would the United States leave, or would it permit anti-U.S. political factions to gain power? Even now, a governmental decree provides penalties and censorship if a paper publishes "any matter defamatory or contemptuous of the nation or Thai people . . . or any matter capable of causing the respect and confidence of foreign countries in regard to Thailand, the Thai Government or Thai people in general to diminish." The United States, despite its desire to support democratic governments, is tied to the defense of yet another dictatorship whose indifference to its rural population has contributed many of the problems that the U.S. is being asked to solve.

But, as one speaker pointed out at the conference (quoting the current ambassador to Thailand, William Martin), U.S. soldiers are being committed to die for the Thailand dictatorship. The depth of this commitment has not yet been discussed openly in the United States.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, has morning business been concluded?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further morning business? If there is no further morning business, morning business is closed.

REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the unfinished business be laid before the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will state the bill by title.

The LEGISLATIVE CLERK. A bill (S. 2515) to authorize the establishment of the Redwood National Park in the State of California, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Montana?

There being no objection, the Senate resumed the consideration of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to the order entered yesterday, the Chair recognizes the senior Senator from Louisiana [Mr. ELLENDER].

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield to me very briefly, without losing his right to the floor?

Mr. ELLENDER. I yield.